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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MEEKS of New York).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 13, 2007.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GREGORY W. MEEKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) for 5 minutes.

IRAQ

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

By the end of 2006, most Americans could see that our strategy in Iraq was not working. In January of this year, President Bush outlined his plan to win the war in Iraq. And just last week, Speaker PELOSI and the Democrat majority announced their plan to end the war in Iraq. The only problem with that, Mr. Speaker, is that, as George Orwell wrote, the quickest way to end the war is to lose it, and I believe that the Democratic plan to micromanage

our war in Iraq with benchmarks and deadlines for withdrawal is a prescription for retreat and defeat.

Common sense and the Constitution teach us that Congress can declare war. Congress can fund or choose not to fund war. But Congress must not ever attempt to conduct war. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to heed the call of the Constitution and common sense and reject the Pelosi plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

It turns out, Mr. Speaker, that I am actually not alone in my concern about the constitutionality and the common-sense value of the current plan for withdrawal from Iraq being propounded by the majority. The newspaper of record in the home State of Speaker PELOSI, the Los Angeles Times, wrote an editorial yesterday under the title "Do We Really Need a General Pelosi?" adding "Congress can cut funding for Iraq, but it shouldn't micromanage the war." Allow me to quote further from yesterday's lead editorial in the Los Angeles Times:

"After weeks of internal strife, House Democrats have brought forth their proposal for forcing President Bush to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq by 2008. The plan is an unruly mess: bad public policy, bad precedent and bad politics. If the legislation passes, Bush says he'll veto it, as well he should."

The Los Angeles Times editorial board went on:

"It was one thing for the house to pass a nonbinding vote of disapproval. It's quite another for it to set out a detailed timetable with specific benchmarks and conditions for the continuation of the conflict."

The L.A. Times asked, "Imagine if Dwight Eisenhower had been forced to adhere to a congressional war plan in scheduling the Normandy landings or if, in 1863, President Lincoln had been forced by Congress to conclude the Civil War by the following year."

They conclude, "This is the worst kind of congressional meddling in mili-

tary strategy," adding, "By interfering with the discretion of the Commander in Chief and military leaders in order to fulfill domestic political needs, Congress undermines whatever prospects remain of a successful outcome."

And even in today's Washington Post, another lion of the liberal media in America, under the lead editorial headline, The Pelosi Plan for Iraq, they write:

"In short, the Democrat proposal to be taken up this week is an attempt to impose detailed management on a war without regard to the war itself."

The Washington Post adds: "Congress should rigorously monitor the Iraqi government's progress on those benchmarks. By Mr. Bush's own account, the purpose of the troop surge in Iraq is to enable political process. If progress does not occur, the military strategy should be reconsidered."

But here is the key line in the Washington Post lead editorial today: "But aggressive oversight is quite different from mandating military steps according to an inflexible timetable conforming to the need to capture votes in Congress or at the 2008 polls."

It is truly extraordinary how politics and common sense and the Constitution can make such strange bedfellows. I scarcely think, Mr. Speaker, that I have ever come to the floor of this House and quoted at any length the lead editorial in either the Washington Post or the Los Angeles Times. Those two newspapers tend to bookend the country from a liberal perspective in the media. But in both cases, both newspapers have identified what I asserted in the beginning, that my colleagues should heed the call of the Constitution and common sense and reject the Pelosi plan for retreat and defeat in Iraq.

It is the purview of the Congress to declare war. It is the purview of this Congress to vote up or down on whether we should continue to fund military

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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